



## PREFACE

This Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) represents an intensive effort by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to identify and evaluate strategic opportunities and issues relative to the Refuge's ability to accomplish its purpose, contribute to the mission of the Service and the National Wildlife Refuge System, and to meet other relevant mandates (Chapter 1 and 3).

The history of the Refuge dates back to the early 1930s when the U.S. Government acquired 114,964 acres of land in Juneau, Wood, Monroe, and Jackson counties, Wisconsin, to assist farmers living within the area and to develop the area for wildlife.

The Refuge was established in 1939 as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and for use as an inviolate sanctuary for migratory birds. It is located in central Wisconsin, about 180 miles southeast of Minneapolis, Minnesota, 150 miles northwest of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and about four miles west of Necedah, Wisconsin (Figure A).



**Figure A** - The Refuge (i) is located in Juneau and Wood County Wisconsin.

Situated on the bed of former Glacial Lake Wisconsin and the Great Central Wisconsin Swamp, land in and around the Refuge was once a vast peat bog with some low wooded islands and savannas; the higher sand ridges were occupied by mature stands of pines and other species. Today the Refuge consists of 43,696 acres of wetlands and open water areas, pine, oak, and aspen forests, grasslands, and rare savannas, all of which support a rich diversity of fish, wildlife, and plant populations. Over 230 different species of birds have been observed on the Refuge since its inception. The Refuge also supports several threatened, endangered, and rare species like the Karner blue butterfly, Blanding's turtle, and the eastern massasauga rattlesnake, as well as resident game species including the white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and ruffed grouse. Nearly 150,000 people visit the Refuge annually to hunt, fish, hike, observe and photograph wildlife, pick berries, or just relax among the trees, wetlands, and wildlife.

Management of the Refuge is carried out by a multi-disciplined team of biologists, technicians, and support staff who are recognized leaders in their fields. Protecting, restoring, and maintaining biologically diverse and productive wetlands, forest land, and open landscapes for Service trust resources (listed species, waterfowl and other migratory birds, native biological diversity, and cultural and archaeological resources) are key indicators of management success. Management tools involve water level manipulation, prescribed burning, timber harvest, land acquisition, and public outreach and environmental education. Scientifically rigorous monitoring and research activities create the foundation from which quality management decisions are made. Cooperative working relationships with universities, other Federal agencies, the state of Wisconsin, elementary and secondary educational institutions, and non-government organizations are key assets to management success.



The CCP begins with a statement of purpose, details on the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, a description of the planning process, and background information on the Service and the National Wildlife Refuge System. A discussion of the Refuge includes its history and purpose, resource setting, and operational components. A planning context discusses Refuge authorities and legal mandates, directives, opportunities and issues, unique assets, ecosystem goals, regional fish and wildlife priorities, other relevant landscape-level plans and planning efforts, and management assumptions, all serving as a basis from which Refuge management direction (goals, objectives, and strategies) was derived. An implementation section discusses tools to be used and a time-line to be followed to achieve desired Refuge outcomes. The resulting CCP is a visionary statement of what the Refuge aims to be, what it proposes to do, and how its programs and projects will be accomplished over the next 10-15 years. The CCP covers the period 2001 through 2015.

Future management of the Refuge aims to restore and preserve biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the Refuge and the Yellow River Focus Area (Figure 11), a 21,953-acre area located adjacent to the Refuge for the benefit of listed species, waterfowl and other migratory birds, and native biological diversity. Refuge staff will be leaders in building mutually-beneficial relationships with the public and their partners, and will facilitate, to the extent possible, high quality wildlife-dependent environmental education, interpretation, and recreation experiences that fosters the public's understanding and appreciation for the Refuge, National Wildlife Refuge System, and Service trust resources, and the role humankind plays in their stewardship.

The Refuge could not function without the talents, knowledge, and innovative ideas from its extraordinary staff:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Larry Wargowsky  | <i>Refuge Manager</i>                               |
| David Trudeau    | <i>Refuge Operations Specialist</i>                 |
| Immanuel Johnson | <i>Refuge Operations Specialist (Private Lands)</i> |
| Richard King     | <i>Wildlife Biologist</i>                           |
| Bill Peterson    | <i>Biologist (Private Lands)</i>                    |
| Jonathan Olson   | <i>Biological Technician (Private Lands)</i>        |
| Michael Belsky   | <i>Biological Technician</i>                        |
| LuAnn Rochester  | <i>Administrative Technician</i>                    |
| Rebecca Power    | <i>Park Ranger</i>                                  |
| Jennifer Rabuck  | <i>Park Ranger</i>                                  |
| Harold Carter    | <i>Maintenance Mechanic</i>                         |
| Larry Neiman     | <i>Equipment Operator</i>                           |
| Jean Arciszewski | <i>Office Automation Clerk</i>                      |
| Shirley Rumppe   | <i>Office Automation Clerk</i>                      |

For further information on the Refuge, the National Wildlife Refuge System, or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, please contact:

Necedah National Wildlife Refuge  
W7996 20<sup>th</sup> Street West  
Necedah, Wisconsin 54646-7531  
Phone (608) 565-2551  
Fax (608) 565-3160  
E-Mail: [Larry\\_Wargowsky@fws.gov](mailto:Larry_Wargowsky@fws.gov)